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**Two-month
closure for
Highway 9**

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FELTON — San Lorenzo Valley residents won't be driving Highway 9 into Santa Cruz for at least two months.

Caltrans engineering geologist Joan Van Velsor and Caltrans Senior Maintenance Engineer Joe Battagilini made that assessment Tuesday.

Commuters into Santa Cruz have been forced to use Graham Hill Road since a portion of Highway 9, two miles south of Felton at Glengarry Road, washed away during storms last Wednesday.

The original 50-foot slice of land that washed out under Highway 9 has also worsened to 75 to 100 feet with the additional rains, Van Velsor said. She said the problem could also "get worse" as rain continues.

Light to moderate rain is predicted for the next two days.

Van Velsor and Battagilini said engineering studies are scheduled next week to determine what sort of repairs will have to be made. Van Velsor said any repairs will be "fairly intensive," probably involving the construction of a 20-foot retaining wall made of concrete beams. The wall would have to run the length of the undermined section of Highway 9.

"Basically, we have to rebuild the platform that the highway sits on," Van Velsor said.

Besides that portion of Highway 9, other roads in the county still closed due to flooding or mudslides include:

- Murphy's Crossing, Harkins Slough and Lee roads, all in Watsonville.

- Ocean Street Extension in Santa Cruz.

In addition, 30th Avenue will be closed at the end of Brommer Street in Live Oak through Thursday for emergency storm-drain repairs. Motorists on upper 30th Avenue will have access only via Capitola Road.

All other county roads are passable except for small roads in the Santa Cruz Mountains that have been hit by small mudslides. Motorists are urged to use extra caution during rainy weather.